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KNUCKLES: THE RETURN
PART 4 OF 4

#12

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Hunzeker

Welcome to the planet Mobius – a world unique and beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where Knuckles the Echidna, guardian of Angel Island, defends his friends and homeland from the forces of evil!

ECHOES of the PAST

PART FOUR

DARK EGG LEGION -- DOWNUNDA CHAPTER'S BASE GREAT CRATER BASIN

SO YOU ARE IN LEAGUE WITH THE DARK EGG LEGION. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU WERE PLAYING US FOR SAPS, FINITEVUS.

YES, YOU SHOULD HAVE.

DR. FINITEVUS EVIL SCIENTIST

KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA GUARDIAN OF ANGEL ISLAND

DUCK BILL PLATYPUS GRANDMASTER OF THE LOCAL D.E.L. CHAPTER

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I RAN INTO THIS LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE LEGION WHILE INVESTIGATING THE VERY RUINS THAT LED YOU TO ME. LO AND BEHOLD, WE HAD A COMMON INTEREST.

WHILE I HAVE NO LOVE FOR DR. ROBOTNIK OR HIS SUCCESSOR-- THE "IRON QUEEN", WAS IT?-- WE ALL DESIRE THE MASTER EMERALD.

"I AGREED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MY WARP RING TECHNOLOGY TO ENSNARE YOUR PRECIOUS ANGEL ISLAND."

IN RETURN, I AM FREE TO STUDY THE MASTER EMERALD AT MY LEISURE.

YOU ALREADY HEXED IT AND USED IT TO TURN ME INTO ENERJAK. WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

AHHAHA! OH, KNUCKLES! THERE'S ***SO MUCH*** MORE TO DISCOVER.

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'M TO OVERSEE THE LAST OF ANGEL ISLAND BEING REELED BACK INTO ITS PLACE HERE IN THE GREAT CRATER.

A WORD OF ADVICE, GRANDMASTER.

HAVE YOUR MEN COMB THE CRATER FOR THE FEMALE ECHIDNA AND THE SQUIRREL CHILD. THEY HAVE TO BE HERE *SOMEWHERE.*

I HAVE *BUSINESS* WITH THE PRISONERS. I DO NOT WANT TO BE DISTURBED.

SIR!

DEET!

I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR THIS.

WAIT-- WE'RE FREE?

NOT LIKE THEY COULD HOLD ME, BUT *BOY* DOES THAT FEEL GOOD!

I'D RATHER *YOU* STAYED LOCKED UP, VECTOR, BUT I NEED ALL THE HELP I CAN GET AT THIS POINT.

LIKE *YOU'RE* IN A POSITION TO JUDGE ANYWAY, BILL.

WHAT GIVES, WALTZ? YOU SAID HE TURNED ON YOUR TEAM.

THAT, AND HELPED CONQUER DOWNUNDA FOR THE EGGMAN EMPIRE.

YOU HAVE A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO, BILL, ESPECIALLY TO ME.

I'M SO SORRY, BARBY. I WANTED TO TELL YOU-- ALL OF YOU--BUT I NEVER HAD TIME.

"WHEN DR. ROBOTNIK PUT NEW PRESSURE ON THE REGION, MY PEOPLE SAW AN OPPORTUNITY FOR POWER. THEY CAME TO ME SINCE I LED THEM ONCE BEFORE.

"I COULDN'T DISSUADE THEM, SO I TRIED TO MANAGE THE CRISIS. I VOLUNTEERED MYSELF TO DR. ROBOTNIK TO MAINTAIN CONTROL, I GUESS HE LIKED THE IDEA OF ME TURNING TRAITOR.

"WE WERE 'UPGRADED' WITH CYBERNETICS AND MADE A NEW CHAPTER OF HIS GROWING 'DARK EGG LEGION.' WE SET UP BASE HERE IN THE GREAT CRATER'S BASIN, AND YOU KNOW THE REST."

THERE WASN'T ANY WAY TO GET WORD TO YOU AND TELL YOU MY PLAN.

I'VE TRIED TO MISMANAGE THINGS, BUT I HAD TO MAKE ***SOME*** PROGRESS OR ROBOTNIK WOULD FIGURE OUT MY REAL MOTIVES.

I'M SO, SO SORRY.

THAT'S ONE OF THE STUPIDEST, MOST RECKLESS THINGS YOU'VE EVER DONE... THANKS, MATE.

THANK *YOU* FOR UNDERSTANDING.

BUT WE STILL DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. YOU HAVE TO ACT NOW WHILE YOU HAVE ME UNGUARDED AND WITH THEIR GUARD DOWN.

TOO RIGHT. GURU, IF HE TRIES TO ESCAPE, SHOW HIM YOUR TRADEMARK RUTHLESSNESS.

YOU'RE STILL A PACIFIST, RIGHT?

SHA, DUDE,

EVERYONE READY TO GET SOME PAYBACK?

OH YES.

LET ME *VOICE* MY COMPLAINTS FIRST.

RAAAAAAHHH

WOMBAT STU D.F.F.

BARBY KOALA D.F.F.

WALT WALLABEE D.F.F.

MIGHTY THE ARMADILLO CHAOTIX

VECTOR THE CROCODILE CHAOTIX

THRASH THE TASMANIAN D.F.F. (?)

CHAOTIX! DOWNUNDA FREEDOM FIGHTERS! CHARGE!

LET US TAKE CARE OF OUR HOME, MATE. YOU GO TAKE CARE OF YOURS.

GOOD LUCK!

YEAH, ABOUT THAT. THE ISLAND IS STILL A FEW *MILES* UP THERE, AND WE'RE FRESH OUT OF WARP RINGS.

MAYBE I COULD JURY RIG ONE OF THOSE WINGED DINGO 'BOTS...

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT! FINITEVUS IS ALREADY ON THE ISLAND!

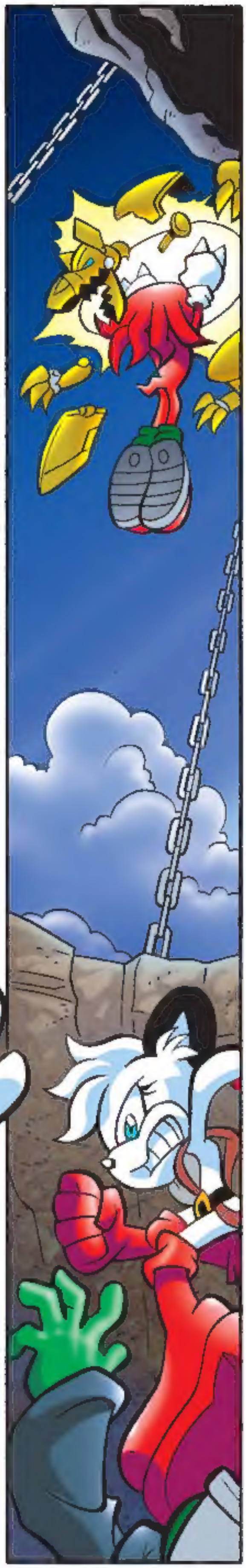
I'LL GET YOU THERE.

WHAT DO YOU-- WAIT, YOU'RE SURE?

POSITIVE.

AS SONIC MIGHT SAY: "LET'S DO IT TO IT!"

PLEASE DON'T. IT'S BAD ENOUGH WHEN HE DOES IT.



ANGEL ISLAND--
SHRINE ISLE

FINITEVUS! STOP!

KNUCKLES?!

OH, WHY SHOULD I BE SURPRISED?

LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK.

LET'S NOT RUSH TO VIOLENCE, I APOLOGIZE FOR USING YOU BEFORE, ALL RIGHT?

I DIDN'T THINK A DEVOUT GUARDIAN LIKE YOURSELF WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE WORLD'S SITUATION CLEARLY.

BUT NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN THROUGH MY EYES, NOW THAT YOU SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO, WILL YOU JOIN ME IN SAVING THIS WORLD?

ALL I'M JOINING IS MY FIST TO YOUR FACE!

THE LAST THING THIS WORLD NEEDS IS ANOTHER ENERJAK!

WOOF!

OH HO! HAHA! YOU POOR, NAÏVE BOY.

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ENERJAK THROUGHOUT THE AGES!

GRANTED, I MAY HAVE RUSHED THE SCENARIO WITH YOU, BUT WHAT IS SCIENCE WITHOUT ITS TRIAL AND ERROR?

WAIT... DIMITRI WAS THE FIRST ENERJAK.

THAT WAS ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

MY BOY, YOU'VE ONLY SCRAPED THE SURFACE OF OUR HISTORY! I CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH ALL THE ANSWERS YOUR FOREFATHERS COULD NOT AND ***WOULD NOT*** GIVE YOU.

THE ANSWER TO THE STRANGE RUINS ON BOTH THIS ISLAND AND BELOW. ALL THE SECRET SINS OF ALBION, THE TRUTH TO ENERJAK AND THE "GODDESS" AURORA.

AND THEN WE CLEANSE THIS WORLD THAT IS LIKE A GARDEN GONE WILD.

WE'RE SO MUCH ALIKE--WE DON'T NEED TO BE ENEMIES, CLARITY AND PURITY IS WHAT I'M OFFERING, KNUCKLES ANYTHING YOU WANT.

ANYTHING I WANT?

I WANT MY FATHER BACK!

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO FACE MY MOTHER AGAIN!

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO FACE MY PEOPLE AGAIN!

AND I WANT--

YOU--

OFF--

MY--

--ISLAND!

CHILD,

SPOILED WITH POWER,

BLIND TO REALITY...

...WITH NO VISION FOR THE FUTURE!

WHAM

YOU CAN CALL ME IGNORANT ALL YOU WANT. I'LL SHOW YOU HOW MUCH I KNOW!

IS YOUR COMMAND OF CHAOS ENERGY SUPPOSED TO IMPRESS ME?

YOUR LACK OF CONTROL GAVE ME MY CONNECTION TO THE MASTER EMERALD. FITTING THAT I USE IT TO DESTROY YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?

KEEP TALKING, I'VE GOT ALL THE REASONS I NEED TO SHUT YOU UP.

KRA-KOOM

THE *SERVERS* ARE THE SEVEN CHAOS...

THE *SERVANTS* ARE THE SEVEN CHAOS...

CHAOS IS POWER, *ENRICHED* BY THE *HEART*...

CHAOS IS POWER, *CONTROLLED* BY *MY* WILL...

THE CONTROLLER EXISTS TO *UNIFY* THE CHAOS!

THE CONTROLLER EXISTS TO *ENSLAVE* THE CHAOS!

KRA-

-KOOM

HUFF HUFF

HUFF HUFF

HUFF HUFF

HUFF HUFF

MAGN.FICENT! BUT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

WHA--?!

FWASH

ONE LAST EXPERIMENT, GUARDIAN, AND WE'RE THROUGH.

LET'S FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CLOSE ONE OF THESE WHEN YOU'RE ONLY HALF-WAY THROUGH.

ZAP

RRRGH!

RAY THE FLYING SQUIRREL CHAOTIX JUNIOR MEMBER

JUST WATCHING YOUR BACK, HON.

JULIE-SU KNUCKLES'PARTNER

I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU.

NOW, LIKE I SAID BEFORE...

...GET OFF MY ISLAND.

SO... BACK UP TO ANGEL ISLAND WITH ALL YOUR ECHIDNA FRIENDS?

NO, ACTUALLY.

NO?

OH, RIGHT. I REMEMBER YOU SAYIN' ALL THAT'S LEFT WORK FOR THE IRON QUEEN NOW.

HALF OF THEM, YEAH, BUT STILL...

THE OTHER HALF ARE HIDDEN AWAY FOR THEIR SAFETY.

'COURSE! SURE WOULD BE A TERRIBLE THING FOR THE LAST OF YER KIND TO GET WIPED OUT.

AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU, THRASH?

ME CHUMS HERE HAVE THINGS UNDER CONTROL, I GUESS I'LL TAKE UP ME OLD QUEST. TA!

IT'S GONNA BUG ME FOREVER THAT WE NEVER FOUND DOC F'S BODY.

YOU KNOW BETTER, VECTOR. HE'LL BE BACK.

YEAH? WELL, HE CAN BRING IT.

I'M PROUD OF YOU, Y'KNOW. I KNOW HOW MUCH YOUR HERITAGE AND HISTORY MEAN TO YOU. FINITEVUS'S OFFER HAD TO BE TEMPTING.

NOT REALLY.

FINITEVUS LIKES TO TWIST THINGS TO HIS POINT OF VIEW. BESIDES, EVEN IF HE TOLD NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, IT'S NOT WORTH EVERY-THING I HAVE NOW.

GOOD TO KNOW, HANDSOME. 'CAUSE I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE ANYTIME SOON.

I KNOW.

YOU BAFFLE ME, GUARDIAN.

IS YOUR THINKING SO SIMPLE THAT YOU THINK YOU'RE ACTUALLY PROTECTING SOMETHING OF WORTH? HOW SAD.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, YOU'RE TRULY BEYOND SAVING. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T BE USEFUL.

I HAVE MANY MORE PLANS, AND YOUR LIFE IS A SACRIFICE I'M WILLING TO MAKE.

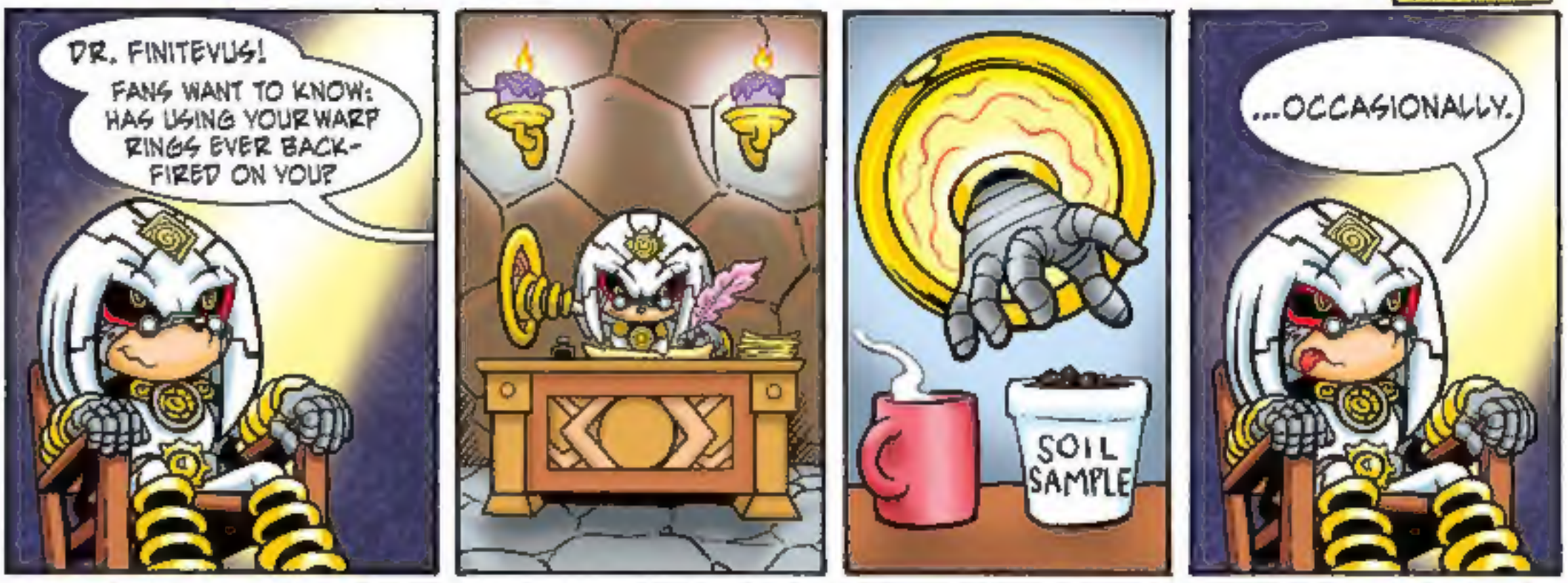
ANGEL ISLAND IS SAFE FOR NOW--BUT FOR HOW LONG? AND WHAT IS DR. FINITEVUS PLOTTING?

COME BACK NEXT TIME AS WE BEGIN A BRAND NEW ADVENTURE!

MY SONIC UNIVERSE™ OFF-PANEL

OFF PANEL. ECHOES of the PAST

"THAT'S NASTY"



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OFF PANEL. ECHOES of the PAST

"CARRIED AWAY"

NINE YEARS. NINE YEARS SINCE MY OWN COMIC WAS CANCELED. NINE YEARS OF BEING AN "EXTRA" - A "SIDE-KICK."
BUT NOW I'VE RETURNED! A WHOLE STORY ARC DEVOTED TO MY PLOT LINES! AND THIS IS ONLY JUST THE BEGINNING!
SOON "SONIC UNIVERSE" WILL BE MINE! IT WILL BE ALL KNUCKLES, ALL THE TIME! AND THEN MAYBE I'LL TAKE SONIC'S BOOK AS MY OWN! TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY!!!
AAAAAAAAND HE'S LOST IT.
AND I THOUGHT HE WAS SCARY AS ENERJAK . . .
WAH-HA-HA-HA! MINE MINE MINE MINE!

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HEY, KIDS!

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